

The Homesteader  
and Other Poems

Alice Pyne Mc Davitt



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*The Homesteader  
and Other Poems*



# The Homesteader and Other Poems

*By*

*Alice Pyne McDavitt*  
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## INTRODUCTION

"Of making of books there is no end,"  
In olden days was said;  
Now in the oft-trod paths we wend  
In the footprints of the dead.

And so I offer forth my rhymes  
To wile an idle hour  
In sultry Summer's sunny time  
Or when storms of Winter lower.

And may they win me friends to love,  
Where-ever they may go  
My readers find a treasure trove  
To read again—and slow.

God grant I weaken no man's creed,  
May faith be brighter still,  
Of darkened doubt be left no seed  
To taint the human will.

The talents that we each may have  
Are given of Thee,—our God,  
Soon to be requited in love,  
While we sleep 'neath the sod.



# *The Homesteader and Other Poems*

## THE HOMESTEADER

### I

A merchant in an Eastern town,  
And in the prime of life,  
With a daughter fair of sweet sixteen,  
And a lady for a wife.

And he was doing fairly well,  
His business brought him gain;  
But he dreamed forever of Western lands  
And fields of golden grain.

And office and desk more hateful grew  
And the city's dust and dins.  
He compared them often to himself  
With horses and crops and bins.

And he thought him not of the life of ease,  
Fine linen, and social life;  
Of servants who served and sought to please,  
Of his daughter, or his wife.

Of the lonely life on the distant wilds,  
Of the cabin for mansion changed,  
Of toil-worn hands and care-worn face,  
Or the settlers' distant range,

Of the arduous tasks that are never done,  
Tho' one works from dawning gray  
Through blistering heat of noonday sun  
Until eve and the moon's pale rays,

And of the risks of failing crops,  
And the rains that will not come,  
Of the dull dumb hatred of it all  
And the farmers' scanty home,

Of the bank accounts that are very rare  
To be found on the yeoman's side,  
Of the ashen face of the farmer's wife  
Who was once a blooming bride.

He knew it not he could not toil  
Who had never learned how to farm,  
His hands were as white and free from soil  
As his soul was free from harm.

As for horses he knew not good from bad,  
But had loved them from a child;  
And his youthful dreams had been often filled  
With the breaking of bronchos wild.

Oh, a shining mark for sharks was he  
As good as they often find.  
They looked him over and winked again  
And smiled to the men behind.

Who sold him teams of lean sorry skates  
At prices of fabulous worth.  
As he drew the reins o'er those ponies' backs  
He was one of the Lords of Earth.

He hired a car and loaded it full  
Till there was not room for more,  
And as he bought each parcel and lot  
Few knew how his hopes did soar.

He sold his business and at a loss,  
But for that he did not care,  
So glad was he to find himself free  
For those Western lands so fair.

Oh! False is the lure of gold I'm told,  
And for Love a man may die,  
But the Western fever in its grip  
Is worse by far, they say.

And the Western fever held its course  
As he bade each friend good-bye.  
With a clasp of the hand he said farewell,  
And a brightening of the eye

As he asked them to come to his Western home  
And partake of the settlers' fare,  
And each get a homestead for himself  
Ere they grew both scarce and rare.

## II

The journey by rail was dull and cold,  
And the horses pined and died;  
And he drew them forth by the wayside grim  
And buried them side by side.

Until at last only three were left  
Of all he had bought in pride.  
He reckoned the price he had paid for each  
And he turned away and sighed.

Arrived at last at his journey's end,  
Ah, 'twas then his troubles began!  
Had his soul been made of baser stuff  
He'd have felt himself undone.

The feed was scarce and the feed was high,  
His three horses must be fed;  
The inn was poor and the "grub" was worse,  
And scant was the fare and bed.

Oh! prices were high in that Western town  
Where every man is alive;  
And each must look unto himself.  
For every one must thrive.

He hied him forth to a land agent then,  
Or an agent hied to him;  
And a very brilliant tale was told,  
And related with gust and vim.

Perhaps he failed to believe it all;  
But of that I cannot record,  
But his hopes once faded revived again  
As the Phoenix from ashes soared.

He saw the land was fair and good,  
The soil would be hard to beat,  
The Winter is dry and cold, they said;  
Winds lessen the Summer's heat.



He filed for a homestead ; that wasn't enough ;  
He thought he would like to own  
Those Western regions for miles around  
And have it in Spring wheat sown.

He bought some land and bargained for more ;  
And implements, horses, and cows,  
And harness and lumber, all count high,  
And oxen and sheep and sows.

And perhaps his judgment was just as good  
As of many a city man  
Who lived all his life 'mong ledgers and books  
And did many a column scan.

But of farming well he didn't know much.  
But he thought that he did, you see ;  
And was willing to learn, if he only could.  
And the farmer's life is free.

Free to toil till death doth come,  
Tho' his muscles may relax ;  
To till the land and sow the wheat  
And barley and oats and flax.

The Summer was dry, and his crop was poor,  
And his money was growing scant ;  
Of provisions for Winter he had enough  
And—he had never known want.

## III

That Winter the settlers often say  
Was the worst they ever knew;  
And November's breath was icy cold  
As it froze the lake and slough.

And every day grew colder still,  
And the wind a cutting blast,  
And the snow came down on those open plains  
Till in billows high 'twas cast.

As high as the tops of the sodded shacks,  
And still it fell, they say,  
As tho' it never meant to quit  
Till the end of the Judgment Day.

And then, alas, his wife fell ill,  
And each day she seemed to fail.  
"I am so tired," she often said,  
"Of the snow and sleet and hail.

"And oh to be 'mong my people again,  
And oh for my mother dear;  
My sister's face I long to see,  
But I shall be buried here.

"And oh to see the church again,  
The church where we were wed.  
To hear a sermon but once more."  
Again and again she said.

She passed away one Winter's morn.

And seemed not loath to go.

She bade a smiling goodbye to each.

Ah, yes—it is often so.

And the heartsick fret for the absent face.

Oh, father and daughter could tell

Of the anguished and often sleepless nights.

Yet each must say, "'twas well."

With some the memories do not dull

And grow dim as the days go by:

The absent are ever in the heart,

Tho' bright the smiling eye.

Perhaps it was best that toil they must

As the Springtime came again

With the undullous Chinooks' breezes mild

And the sunshine and the rain.

And the hope that lives in the human breast

That sorrow but seldom slays.

Tho' every one of us wonders oft

At the mystery of human ways.

Now that it happened he did not care

As to crop or rain or drought.

It seemed that luck had come his way.

That fortune had sought him out.

And every venture brought success:

Then coal on his land was found.

And capital with its bustling ways

Was at work on the fields around.

And his homestead site was chosen then  
For the railroad's busy town,  
And never more would his oxen plow  
Or his wheat again be sown.

And lots were sold and houses built,  
And money came to him,  
As if to comfort as best it might  
The man whose eyes were dim

With the memory of the loss of her  
Who had been so glad to go,  
So tired was she of the dreary plains  
And the hail and sleet and snow.

## THE SEARCH FOR GOLD

I would tell as best it may be  
The version of a miner's tale;  
Tell it as he told it to me  
Of his search that did not fail,

Of the mines and of the working,  
Of the desert and the plain,  
Of the dangers ever lurking  
And the miner's thirst has slain.

And I wish I had the wording  
And the genius but to write  
In the English that was curdling  
Of the horrors of the fight:

Of the burning of sun shining,  
Of the glaring of the sand,  
Of the digging without whining,  
And the vale of Dead Man's Land,

Of the finding of the treasure  
And the lack of water there,  
Of the gold to buy him leisure  
And the love of lady fair,

Of the thirst so fiercely burning  
That at last his reason fled,  
Of the folly of returning  
Tho' his lips were parched and bled.

Return! Ah, no. Indeed, how could he  
Cross that burning desert plain?  
Pile the nuggets high there would he  
In the sands where is no rain.

And he babbled to the lizards  
Of the beauty of his love  
Who had bade him brave the hazards,  
Bring of gold a miser's trove.

"I will wait a life-time for you,  
And will pray both day and night."  
Thought he of those words so truthful  
And the purpose that was right.

As he staggered with the shivers  
That are not brought on by cold,  
Dreamed he of the shimmering rivers;  
Then he cursed the shining gold.

Ten miles back of him was water.  
He would strive to reach it there  
'Mid the maniac's dreadful laughter  
And wild shoutings on the air.

Came across a canteen rusty,  
And some ants and clothing worn,  
And a skull and bare bones musty,  
Tho' the flesh from them was shorn.

By the skeleton knelt he blindly,  
Touched the hideous thing with care;  
Soft and low he asked it kindly,  
"Searched you too for gold with prayer?"

"Did a woman beg with kisses,  
    Bid bring back the miner's gold;  
Did the lizards give you hisses  
    As they taunted you of old?

"Did you find the gold as I did,  
    Did you seek for water here,  
And from you had reason fled, too,  
    Ere you sought your lonely bier?"

There the miners found him babbling,  
    Talking to that awful skull,  
With the maniac's senseless gabbling,  
    Thirst and hunger rendered dull.

And they carried him to shelter,  
    Gave him of their tenderest care,  
Food and water by the spoonful,  
    For such kindness is not rare.

And his reason came back to him,  
    And he told them of his find,  
Found again the nuggets due him,  
    And he showed the traces wind,

And the colors and the workings,  
    And the mined for golden store,  
And the patience of the diggings  
    That of treasure would yield more.

Did he find his sweetheart faithful?  
    Was she true who had sent him there?  
For—sometimes—are women truthful  
    But this one was only fair.

## THE STORM-QUEEN

## I

The spirit of the storm  
Is brooding o'er the deep;  
She calleth forth her minions  
Who never, never sleep.  
From caverns deep of oceans broad  
They whispering gather round,  
A ghastly throng of elfin brood  
With beetling brows and ashen face.  
Of serpent form and hissing voice,  
They answer to the sound  
Of lowering tempests' awful roar,  
Of darkening clouds and waves that soar  
O'er sinking ship and drowning crew,  
With wailing voice that echoes,—“More,”  
'Midst lashing foam they rushing seek  
Some farthest shore that seas divide,  
Where living men may never more  
Their loved ones see again.

## II

But fair as the day  
Is the face of their queen,  
And her eyes have the glance  
Of power serene,  
And her form is majestic  
With light and with life,  
Who rules o'er dominions  
Of darkness and strife.



Her voice is as gentle  
As cooing of doves  
As she sings to the dying  
Wild songs of dead loves,  
Of hopes that are banished  
With youth's vanished fires,  
And riches to sate  
The meanest miser's desires.

She calls to the brain  
Of the wanderer grim,  
Who cared nought for love  
Of home or of kin;  
And he thinks him again  
Of the mother at home,  
Who prays that kind winds  
Favor those who may roam,

And places a light  
In the window to guide  
Those wandering footsteps  
Again to her side.  
Yet never, oh never,  
On this earth will she see  
The laddie who knelt  
As a child at her knee,

And who now in the storm  
Cons the prayers of his youth,  
With faith he at last  
Seeks the Goodness of Truth.  
"Dear Father, give comfort  
To those who shall weep."

He murmurs a vow  
And sinks silent in sleep.

## III

She sings to the saddened.  
Her song is of rest  
From strife and from sorrow,  
From anger and woe.  
She tells of a home  
Where the weary are blest  
Where never again  
Will they find human foe.

Contented they wander  
Those fair shores to find.  
With dankest of seaweeds  
Their bodies she winds.  
And the moan of the winds!  
Weary Requiem, cease,  
As the aged find comfort  
And Infinite Peace.

## IV

But, oh, to the children  
So sweet is her song!  
They crowd them around her,  
A worshipping throng;  
And loving and gentle  
And tender is she  
Who leads forth the young  
And the careless and free,

To the deep-grottoed niches  
Of the palaces fair,  
Hung round them with jewels  
And pearls most rare;  
And silver and gold  
For a pavement they find;  
Tortuous are the ways  
To those grottoes that wind.

And never again  
May they find their path hence;  
And she whispers a lullaby  
Softly and slow,  
As a mother who loves them  
She croons to them low.  
They sleep there as calmly  
As children at home;  
Forever is vanished  
The lost wish to roam.

## V

Earth's Empires change  
And may crumble away,  
And kings come and go  
That others may sway  
And rule for their hour  
Of pitiful might  
Ere forth they must venture  
To the grave's silent night.

But here is no change.  
Tho' centuries pass,  
The grottoes of ocean

Their Requiems ring,  
And ever the spirit  
    Of storms wild will sing,  
And then croons to the dying  
    Her mad changeful lays  
Till Eternity's Trumpet  
    Sounds the ending of days.

## THE HURLERS OF THE DEAD

"Have you never heard the story, then,  
Of the Hurlers of the Dead?  
Then glad I'll be to tell it you,"  
The gardener to me said.

"T'was a windy day in Autumn,  
The man was weird and old;  
I've often wondered o'er it since,—  
'Twas strange, the tale he told.

"In Cork my early days were spent,  
Tho' Lismore 'tis my home.  
This many's the year I here have worked,  
And I'm now too old to roam.

"O'Driscoll is my name for sure,  
And, know ye, it has been said  
My father's people once were kings  
And gallant soldiers led.

"And many's the bloody fray was fought  
In other days I'm told,"  
And bright the blue eyes flashed at me.  
I smiled—the man was old.

"Are there ghosts in the tower there? you ask.  
I may not tell you how,  
But many the doings queer I've seen,"  
And his form was trembling now.

"Full forty years ago or more  
There be living still, 'tis said;  
But loath to speak are those who've seen  
The Hurlers of the Dead.

"Tho' powers strange they will possess  
Of maladies and ills,  
And of the curious herbs to find  
By many a brook and rill,

"Tho' broodings strange their faces set  
In a way no man should ken,  
They wander often by themselves  
And sadness marks them then.

"'Tis said they know the day they'll leave  
To mingle with the dead,  
And if the lad be single, sure  
No lassie will with him wed.

"'Twas coming home my mother was  
From the wake of Hoolihan,  
And in the graveyard that she passed  
She saw the dead and ran.

"The jokes and fun and tusseling  
Of those who were at play  
And the ghastly faces of them all  
Would fright the heart of clay.

"And the stoutest player of them all  
Was the corpse they'd placed that day  
Within the grave in God's own plot  
All in the good old way.

“And his brother sure did keep the goal,  
The living with the dead.  
At that my mother rushed away  
Tho’ her feet did seem like lead.

“And within a little space of time  
That brother pined full soon,  
And was buried there beyond the gate  
Where the sun doth shine at noon.

“And sure no flowers will ever bloom,  
Nor grass doth grow, ’tis said,  
Where they drop their hurleys down again,  
The Hurlers of the Dead.”

## THE FOOTSTEP ON THE STAIR

A group of greybeards were one day  
Chatting in quite an informal way.  
The wine and pipe had passed along,  
Enlivened with many a pleasant song.

At last the conversation lulled,  
Tho' not in any sense was it dulled;  
But came a pause, and then one smiled,  
And told of having an hour beguiled

By a seance of mediumistic spook,  
In course of which his nerves were shook,  
(Yes, shaken is the proper word,  
But—Euphony—must e'er be heard.)

At this the moments fast flew by  
With ghastly tales of witchery;  
But one there was who gloomed intent  
On old memories of past sentiment.

When gay laugh broke or sally flew,  
Still yet more grave and silent grew,  
Until at last one smiling said  
"Will you tell us why you are so sad?"

"Know you of ghostly prinktune gay?  
If so, give voice and tell us, pray.  
We stake our words we will not doubt  
But cast incredulous thoughts to rout."



He glanced around ; all pledged his tale ;  
But each observed he grew more pale,  
But no one dreamed to hear of spirit  
From such a matter-of-fact of merit.

"Well, men," he said, "I have never told,  
Tho' my story is to my memory old.  
Many years ago when but a lad  
Just fresh from college, with verdure clad,

"I went forth with introductions sent  
From friends of political influence,  
And obtained, as perhaps you may have heard,  
The post of envoy, an important word.

"In the course of my mission I was sent, I will  
say,  
To a country house in an English May.  
That entrance hall I remember yet,  
For I would not if I could forget.

"Yet the haunting sadness it brings to mind  
Some hint of the dreary ocean's wind,  
And the timid footfall on the stair  
I have often heard as I listened there.

"The ancient candelabra and quaint carved chairs,  
The dim old pictures of ladies fair,  
And a priceless painting of 'The Flood,'  
And artistic treasures of field and wood.

" 'Twas waiting as a stranger there  
I first saw a vision upon the stair,—

A maiden young of sylph-like grace,  
With the stately pride of a haughty race.

“And I gazed with rapture and lost my heart  
To a perfect picture of perfect art,  
And, strange as it may seem to you,  
It was not in vain I was forced to sue.

“The happiest man in the world was I  
To know that for love did ‘My Lady’ sigh;  
Yet our love story ended like many another:  
We parted in anger one from the other.

“I had vowed I would not forgive again,  
For bitter was I with jealous pain.  
Yet I halted a moment by the stair  
Where first I had met my darling fair,

“And smiling she came and spoke to me;  
But I turned away and would not see.  
Thus out of her life I passed away,  
Wandered over the world by a devious way.

“But at last one day I understood  
The simple meaning of many a word  
That had caused an estrangement of saddest  
pain,  
And I sought that English home again.

“There was crape on the doors and darkened stair,  
And gloom and sorrow everywhere;  
For the maiden I sought had passed away,  
And my name was the last she spoke, they say.

"I looked at the marbled face so fair  
Ere they bore her body away from where  
Of all the treasures of beauteous worth  
The one most perfect was consigned to earth.

"That night I lingered in that stately hall,  
And alone I glanced 'round the carved wall.  
Then adown that moonlit stairway came  
My beautiful darling with smile the same

"As when I had gone away in scorn  
On that bitter day of a long-past morn.  
As I strove to clasp that form in white  
Where she had been was wan pale light,

"Yet my life was lessened of its pain  
As I heard that timid step again.  
And every year, it has been said,  
Comes ever that footfall of the dead."

## DECEMBER

Sitting by the window,  
List'ning to the rain,  
To the patter, patter,  
Of the rain against the pane.

Dreaming of the past  
That to her has come again,  
With its bitter sorrow,  
With its joy and pain.

'Mid those mists of visions  
She's a girl again,  
List'ning to the dashing  
Of the rain against the pane.

Dear love of days long vanished,  
Come back thru the mystical gloom,  
Take form 'midst the dark'ning shadows  
That are thronging the silent room.

Peering thru the twilight  
And the drip of rain,  
Hear the beat, beat, beating  
Of the storm against the pane.

List'ning for a voice  
She fain would hear again,  
Knowing that at last  
She's waiting not in vain.

Answered is the dreamer,  
She is loved again.  
Death has claimed her promise  
'Midst the rain against the pane.

Love has answered the heartcall,  
Tho' many the years that have fled,  
For thin is the veil that divideth  
The living from the dead.

## MYSTERY

We come, we go,  
We pass upon our way.  
The why we do not know,  
For reason cannot say.

To see our God,  
To know the Infinite,  
We feel the rod;  
No more is definite.

We live, we die,  
And all is mystery.  
To laugh, to sigh,  
Is human history.

All unexplored  
By any living man,  
Tho' judgment soared  
And logic sought to scan.

"Oh, do not dare,"  
All bygone sages say,  
"To venture where  
Beyond—none may—

"Stand back, give o'er;  
No human brain shall ken  
Unnavigable shore  
Of bog and fen."

No line, no word ;  
    Knowledge is guarded here.  
The angel's flashing sword  
    Stops progress drear.

We shall not see,  
    For all is darkest night ;  
The senses reeling flee  
    Who seeks for light.

All philosophies  
    Prove futile, useless, weird,—  
Impenetrable awe  
    Rules abyss neared.

## DEATH

One day, one blessed day,  
A Being grand stood by me,—  
A glowing, shining effulgence played  
Around that form beside me.

He smiled, and gracious thoughts  
Shone on that brow angelic.  
Said I, "What message have you brought  
From other world's symbolic?"

I paused, affrighted—majestic look  
Did gleam in eyes resplendent.  
I felt commensurate silence brook,  
And knew 'twas death commandant.

He spoke in gentle voice and sweet,  
"Come with me; I would show thee."  
The sounds of rushing waters met  
Did close on all around me.

We wandered where the violets bloom  
By wooded slope and river.  
Said he, "All this is but a tomb  
Where man has slept forever."

Again our steps directed were  
To forest grand primeval.  
"Here warriors once and bold and sure,  
Now dead to all of evil;



“And root and branch and leaves decay  
Are fed by legions gory,  
The grave of millions more who may  
Repeat again the story.”

He stooped and lifted from the earth  
Of dust a merest handful.  
“This is composed of men of worth  
And ambitious thoughts unboundful.

“Old Mother Earth is but the shell  
To retake again the cumbers;  
Demolish all who here may dwell  
Of God’s created numbers.”

Again we stood a crowd among  
In a city of dimensions;  
The tide of commerce mighty swung  
’Mid workshop and pretensions.

The motley rushing crowds surged fast  
On business or on pleasure.  
Only a few more years go past  
And winding sheet shall measure.

“Each living form you see to-day  
So strong and fair and graceful  
Shall hence with me from life away  
To dust of oblivion peaceful.

“I sow my seeds of swift decay  
Ere babe is born of woman,  
Allot the time to pass away,  
Restrict the days of human.

“And death is needful to bereft,  
For earth could never feed them.  
If all who lived were living yet,  
Why cannibals would lead them.

“And carnage, blood, and wretchedness  
Would follow dark contention.  
And so I come with blessedness  
And grant to earth—retention.

“But lo!—the soul I cannot stay;  
It returneth to Whom lent it.  
I have no knowledge of the way  
And know not why Who sent it.”

“And are there fairer worlds than this  
Where souls may live forever,  
And realize perfection’s bliss  
By eternal smiling rivers?”

But he was gone, nor said again  
Answer of ill or pleasure;  
Yet queried I, but all in vain,  
The sum of human measure.

## FALSE SHEPHERDS

They ask for a million in cash  
To Christianize the world,  
To free with concerted dash  
The heathen in darkness hurled.

To teach as they have been taught  
In the colleges of to-day  
The gist of the higher thought  
And the trend of the newer way.

And some few there are who cherish  
A reverence for olden days;  
But for others ideals perish  
Who are seekers of newer ways.

Sneer at Genesis of Creation  
As a mythological tale,  
And withhold it from the nations  
Lest perchance their mission may fail.

And some would say that Jesus  
Was naught but a man of clay,  
And doubt the raising of Lazarus;  
—Yet, doubting, they dare to pray.

And dispense a part of the Bible,  
And omit a chapter and verse;  
Take the miracles from the Gospels,  
Teach the doubts of determinate curse.

False shepherds who lead the sheep  
By the gate of destruction grim,  
Do the martyrs in Heaven weep  
Who were tortured and died for Him?

False teachers who teach for pay,  
And seek not for guidance divine,  
Deep planners for to-day  
And the money to be thine.

And would teach from some other book  
Of science and masterly lore,  
While retaining the shepherd's crook  
Consider the Bible a bore.

The danger to-day to fight  
Are these wolves who devour the flock,  
Whose minds rule as guides to the light,  
Yet delude they to doubts that mock.

And the Church does cry to-day  
To be fed of the Living Bread,  
Yet must follow these rulers' sway;  
Do you wonder that Faith is dead?

And the prayers of woe ascend  
To the Father of tender love  
That a teacher may descend  
To re-gather God's flock who rove.

## A SEA SHELL

Pondering o'er some bookshelf lore,  
Wandering idly on the shore,  
Absent glancing at the waves  
As the rockbound coast they lave,

I picked up a lovely shell,  
Shoreward cast by drifting swell,  
And I held it to my ear,  
Listened to its murmurings drear.

By the water's sounding roar  
Where the fleecy cloudlets soar,  
By the ocean that I love  
Where for aye I'd wish to rove.

Thus the echo of the shell  
Seemed a part of ocean's spell,  
Pink and white, a thing of joy,  
Light and wavelets' fragile toy.

And it whispered of its home,  
Of the sea and of its foam,  
And there echoed hints of pain,  
So I tossed the shell again.

'Neath the waves it sank to rest,  
Home again on ocean's breast,  
And these thoughts there came to me  
As the shell went back to sea:

Thou, O man, art mystery,  
Part of God's eternity,  
And thy hopes we may but scan  
As a part of God's great plan.

And thy soul doth seek in vain  
Thru an earthly life of pain,  
Murmuring, searching for the way  
When thy death shall end in day.

## OUR GHOSTS

There are ghosts who invade our lives  
The more we would fain forget,  
Ghosts we meet in the busy street,  
Our friends perchance or their wives.

We pause and smile and pass them by  
With a word, a nod, or a pleasant smile,  
Who have filled our lives with regret  
And our hearts with fear and fret.

Yet our eyes still smile,  
Tho' we hate meanwhile  
Our ghosts whom we hasten to meet,  
And pause as our ghosts we greet.

Oh, could we but cover with sods  
As we bury them deep in their graves  
Beneath where the waving trees nod,  
Or mayhap in the dark ocean's wave.

The ghosts of our friends whom we wish to forget,  
But, alas, who are living and in our paths yet.

Our ghosts whom we hasten to meet,  
With smiles as our ghosts we greet,  
Our friends whom once we loved as friends  
But we know them as friends—no more.

## THE CAUSE

As we follow the scientists' jingling maze  
We trusting read what the Bible says;  
Tho' we reason forever of the why and wherefore,  
Sane logic still tells us there is a therefore.

As we study our earth it seems but small,  
The planet perhaps that is least of all;  
Then we contemplate man and his talk is grand  
Of molecules and atoms and grains of sand.

The cohesive force of infinitive space,  
The abysmal darkness of chaotic place;  
As he pauses and tells you in learned way  
A re-quote of some college professor's say

As to how chance brought the molecule *et al*,  
And millions of centuries ere the atom could  
    crawl,  
More trillions of time and emerged an ape,  
Which is why some ignorant people gape.

And so again after centuries ran  
The job grew perfect and at last came man,  
From a skinclad savage of herbs and roots,  
Until civilized at last he learns to shoot.

Tho' worshipping long moon, idols, and sun,  
Now he states distinctly of Gods there are none;



Yet back of it all we are forced to see  
The hand of a Great Divinity.

And it matters but little as to whether  
We were formed in a week or in ages either,  
But—that we live and are here to-day  
Proves—beyond is God, there's no other way.

## LIFE

Drifting, gliding, passing away,  
A spar on the waters  
I saw to-day ;  
And it seemed to say  
As 'twas swept along,  
Now in the shadow  
Again in the sun ;  
Then by the waters overcast  
And out of sight  
It was gone at last.

I am like unto you,  
Ye sons of men,  
Drifting, gliding, passing away,  
The whim of chance,  
Swift changing play,  
One moment exalted,  
Then lowly again ;  
But swept along  
With the gliding stream  
Until one day you pass along  
Into Eternity.  
Life is done.

## REMINISCENCE

It seems to me we have lived before  
Ere the dawn of earth began.  
In times long past, in a far-off age,  
I have known of hate and love and rage,  
And have studied of problems old and sage,  
Of time and eternity, chaos and calm,  
And did list perchance to the angels' psalms,  
As in glorious tones they did often chant,  
Or tell of a lost soul's grievous plaint  
Ere he found the Heaven of love and faith  
And the tender Father's care.

For the haunting strains of a melody grand  
That recalls a home in a distant land  
Come to me oft in the silent eve,  
And this earth and its sordid ways I leave  
To commune with the long ago.

## WRITERS AND THEIR WARES

## A GAY EVENING

I would pass an evening gaily  
With the minds of long ago,—  
Shakespeare, Milton, Byron, Shelley,—  
But I turn away from Poe.

Wordsworth, Holmes, and Blake, and Kingsley,  
Proudly standing in a row;  
Moore and Jonson, Burns and Dryden,  
Southey, Massey, Ingelow,  
Never Edgar Allan Poe.

Tennyson and Cook and Landon,  
Emerson and Hemans slow,  
Stately Scott and Goethe's measures,  
Dana, Willis, Longfellow,

Hood and Wolfe and Barbault, too,  
Croly, Bryant, Jewett, Lowell,  
Whittier, Keble, and Rossetti,  
Brownings, yes, and Goldsmith, too;  
But never verse of Allan Poe.

With their haunting, witchlike measures  
Of the bells that will not cease  
In my brain they ring forever;  
And "The Raven" gives no peace.

But the repetition soundeth  
Ever, ever, ever-more,  
Till I wish that Raven never  
Never, never, any more.

On that bust of Pallas ever  
Just above the chamber door  
Still would sound forever, ever,  
Ever, ever, ever-more.  
Percival, Halleck, and Taylor,  
But I turn away from Poe.

## THE TOP

“There is always room at the top.”  
In silence she pondered the thought,  
With dreams of girlish fancies  
How she might clamber aloft.

When to the top she'd striven  
Then the full meaning came home,  
Lovelorn and friendless she stood there,  
Away at the top,—Alone.

## THE NOVELIST

She read for pleasure,  
And from all books,  
As one might judge  
By her studious looks.

She dreamed to compose  
A tale herself  
That by good luck  
Might sell itself.

She wrote of lands  
She had never seen,—  
A far too common  
Practice, it seems.

She told of times  
She knew not of;  
And wise ones read  
But forgot to scoff.

The plot was sane,  
Nor filled with sin;  
No runaway wife  
Lurked there within.

Her story is read  
And bound to sell,  
For honest folks  
Love morals well.

## THE MASTERPIECE

"The poem's well done,  
With careful plan,  
And lofty purpose,"  
Said the college man.

"It is sweetly grand,  
Such a charming air,  
With pensive aspect,"  
Said "My Lady" fair.

"The study of weeks  
By midnight oil,  
Each word's well turned,"  
Said her dear friends all.

Sweeping the floor,  
No thought of fame,  
When into her mind  
That sonnet came.

She dropt her broom  
And wrote away,  
And that is how  
Fame came that day.



## THE VERSE WRITER

The editor sat in his sanctum  
And read the verses in haste,  
He quickly scanned each sentence,  
For he had no time to waste.

He found as the day passed over  
They still in his brain took room;  
And he sang the halting measures  
To a quickly improvised tune.

And a master heard the music  
As he halted by the door,  
And he brought forth the beauty and rhythm  
That no one had seen before.

And then came fame, and fortune,  
And laurels fell at his feet;  
Yet he failed to think of the writer  
Who had dreamed of that song complete.

## THE SERPENT'S PEN

He is not kind, he is not wise,  
The poet in a serpent's guise,  
With vaunting talk and slandering tongue,  
Who walks the ways of men among.

With hissing voice and subtle way  
A woman's fame he seeks to slay;  
Condemns the good, convicts the fair,  
And in disguise he seeks to snare.

In justice' name we set him forth,  
Let him be known both North and South,  
A man,—to write of shrugs and things,  
Told of in hints and whisperings.

To prate of woman's fame in rhyme  
Stamps such a man and for all time.  
No talk of just and goodly pride  
Can gloss the cad who would deride.

Who speaks of chat as favored guest  
With gloating pride's expanding chest,  
Leads us to think of slighting words,  
Perhaps by other friends o'erheard.

Of poison tongue and angry way,  
In garb of lamb who seeks to slay,  
Go forth despised, condemned of men,  
The poet with the serpent's pen.

To think that works like his will sell,—  
For by his ad he is known well,—  
That verse like his can move the mart,—  
And even by some be classed as art,—

This lessening of a woman's fame,  
This darkening of a mother's name.

We all have quoted, seen, or heard,  
And surely know each well-placed word.  
By William Watson was it penned,  
And so *none* may dare to defend.

When first we conned of serpent's tongue  
We thought of themes he might save sung;  
With brilliant intellect and wise,  
He might have chosen a kinder guise.

But then again consider well  
Of slanderous tongues with his from h—l.  
When envy seeks her to abuse,  
And Satan aids her tongue to loose.

We all have heard of lives most fair,  
Whose names were blackened by the snare,  
And those with sainted purpose oft  
Have proved the target of the scoff.

I know not heroine of the tongue  
Of whom the poet Watson sung,  
But if she wields a tongue of sorrow  
None ought for her to trouble borrow.

Watson's poems may live for aye;  
Go read his stanzas now to-day.  
"The Ode to Shelley" will excite your wonder,  
"Lachrymae Musarum" ponder.

## MY CASTLE IN SPAIN

Oh, you ought not to give such a stare of surprise  
With incredulous questioning glance of the eyes,  
And smile at my house of prosaic gray,  
With crudest of furnishings far from gay.  
And no wellkept lawn of emerald green  
Interspersed with flowerbeds spaced between.  
No stately driveway do you discern,  
Yet you look as if you would like to learn,  
And your search for news will not be in vain,  
For to-day I shall tell you of my castle in Spain.

It is not always I can find the way,  
Or may borrow the keys of the guardian fay,  
And it's then when tired I only weep  
Till discouragement drives me away to sleep.  
But sometimes it happens when I feel most blue,  
Because of sorrow the same as you,  
Why, then in a trice I am up and away,  
And there for golden hours I stay.  
I wander so haply up many a stair  
That leads to the treasures of my castle most fair.

Oh, the glorious rooms so wide and grand,  
And for leagues around I own the land.  
No sordid bothers can follow one where  
For a few short hours I am happy there.  
Oh, the hangings are made of silks of cost  
(The bills for which have long been lost),  
The rugs are Turkish, rare works of art,

Their equals are seen in no earthly mart.  
But of all the riches most valued to me  
Are my treasure ships sailing over the sea.

I have watched their coming for many a day,  
Across the ocean and safe in the bay.  
“And what do their cargoes consist of?” you smile.  
(Dear me, what a practical question of guile.)  
If you do not watch out, you will render in vain  
A perfect description of my castle in Spain.  
They are loaded with fancies that dreams are made  
of,  
And when they hear this no writers will scoff;  
Many wonderful, beautiful thoughts come to me  
From my golden treasure ships over the sea.

The plots of the books I shall publish some day  
And of how all will read them,—some will, any-  
way,—

Sweet, filmy pale fancies of poems most rare  
Dissolve there before me upon the thin air.  
You cannot conceive of the treasures of worth,  
Roseate, multi-colored, no mere visions of earth.  
And most welcome are you to your gold and its  
care,

I want but my dream-jewels so glittering fair.  
For perfect contentment I seek not in vain  
When alone with my genii in the castle of Spain.

Your cold sneer reminds me of some dreary times  
When weary and sad I seek other climes.  
For there are but fragments all tattered and torn,  
Gray ashes of dreams that are most forlorn,  
And minute bells booming from over the sea

Tell of ships that are lost forever to me,  
And of hopes that are vanished or buried away  
Where comfort can never give forth faintest ray;  
But still is one rainbow fair arched I do see  
When my castle in Spain will come back to me.

## THE MEED

Scant the meed—his published sonnets  
Held an honored scholar's place,  
And his health and life had suffered  
O'er those lines of polished grace.

And came love and marriage to him,  
Children, poverty, and cares,  
Toil and hardship's awful furnace,  
Yet he offered dainty wares.

And unheeding were the rabble,  
And unnoticed were the songs,  
Save by some and men of letters,  
Treasured gems of thought among.

But he wrote for love of writing,  
And one day the pen was stilled  
With the magic of the genius,  
By the wand of death distilled.

Ah! Now comes the praise of thousands,  
Homage offered at his bier,  
But no smile his features softened  
Who had passed unheeded here.



## POETRY

A poet is born, not made  
By rules of men's devising.  
To his soul the metre is said,  
And he sings by improvising.

Pray, who would teach the lark  
As he trills his roundelay?  
To his music you gladly hark  
As he brightens the early day.

Oh! a scholar may write a poem  
More learned than a Burns,  
But no heart will give it a home,  
And none to the reading returns.

And when the spirit says, "Write,"  
The words will come at a thought;  
As the glories that are given to sight  
They are seen and no need to be sought.

## THE DREAMER

Three angels bent o'er a crib one day  
Where smiling in sleep a baby lay  
    In a hovel old and poor.  
The roof unthatched, the glass was gone  
From the window-frame all broken down;  
Yet o'er the child the sunlight streamed  
As he lay content and sweetly dreamed,  
    While death the mother bore  
    To the land where toil is o'er.

“Hard to bear is the lot that's given.  
Kind sister, take the babe to heaven,”  
    The angel of life did pray.  
“Nay, I shall come when the Master sends,”  
And upward at the call of love she wends.  
But genius paused with wondrous gleam  
And she gave to the child the gift to dream  
    And talents of words that may  
    Lure men to a better way.

## FAME

I have planned and hoped,  
Have prayed and striven,  
Have rejoiced and moped,  
Have seized and riven.

I have dared and reached,  
And have trampled down,  
Who was oft discouraged  
When luck had flown.

Believe me, the goal  
Once gained will cloy;  
'Tis but the toll  
To fame's alloy.

## THE EPITOME

What does it all amount to, pray?—  
Our pitiful labor from day to day,  
Our wearisome toil from the dawn of the sun  
Until evening comes and our work is done,  
And folded hands on our bosom cross,  
Done with the gain—and done with the loss.

What matters it whether our path be rough,  
If we meet with kindness or with rebuff,  
Tho' the sunshine over our lives may play  
Or storms may threaten and mar the way?  
Tho' our lifelong journey be ever so steep  
Our eyelids closed will no longer weep.

What does it matter what fame we win,  
And what, tho' the temple may usher us in,  
If envy doth blacken our efforts vain,  
Or praise and honor may keep from stain?  
The laurels will fade and the crown will drop  
When Death doth our earthly progress stop.

It matters not if a friend may sigh,  
Or careless pass our lifework by,  
Or if a storied urn may tell  
The tale of our years and tell it well.  
From struggles and efforts we'll be at rest,  
From hope and anguish, and—it is best.

It amounts to nothing, if misunderstood,  
And warped and twisted be every word.  
Tho' the friend we trusted was false or true,  
And instead of triumph we drank but rue.  
Our sorrow and joy will soon be past,  
And evening comes, and sleep—at last.

## AS TO TROUBLES

If troubles you have, keep them close to yourself.  
Don't constantly lay them away on a shelf,  
To bring them to view again next day,  
To depress poor unfortunate souls who pray  
Their grievous trials may not drive them mad.  
Yet you force them to hear your history sad.  
Do try to-day for once to be glad,  
And count and recount the joys you have had.

If aches and ill health are bothering you,  
Chronic dyspepsia haunts your neighbor, too;  
And none are exempted from painful ills  
Until death has exacted his last due bills.  
If you cannot be gay, why, smile anyway,  
And think of some cheering thing to say  
To dispel of gloom some faintest ray  
And bring quaint brightness to the day.

As you con and recon your pitiful tale  
Remember to others your woes grow stale.  
They will weary of you and your sorrows, too,  
And your doleful company soon eschew.  
Consider how lightly you esteem their bothers,  
How scant is your courtesy for woes of others.  
Now pause and be honest and dare to say  
That of little account are you to-day.

And how small and mean were your noblest  
thoughts

And the wrong and havoc that you have wrought.  
What kindly act did you ever do?  
Who for noble deed could remember you?  
What saintly sacrifice for a friend  
That was not intended to gain some end?  
What struggling soul thru you has thrived?  
Whose life is the better that you have lived?

Seek a way to do some good to your neighbor.  
Observe how his shoulders are bent from labor.  
Be kind to the children, God's helpless poor;  
You may find a mission not far from your door.  
Your hours for work are becoming few;  
Go into the vineyard; there is need of you.  
As the evening comes to each well-filled day  
You will find glad peace as you kneel to pray.

## REALITY

She had worshipped, oh, how madly!  
Divinely he loved and well.  
But to wed she dreamed of sadly,  
For marriage is love's death knell.

Ah, trysts of hopes divine  
And ecstasies wild of yore  
To matrimony resign,  
For worship will come no more.

To bear, to suffer, to rear  
'Mid anguish and thru pain,  
With meek humility's prayer,  
And know that self is slain.

A life prosaic and gray,  
Devoid of all romance,  
Divested eternally  
Of word or look or glance.

To eat, to cook, to live  
Forever and for aye;  
To work, to toil, to thrive  
Till death doth take away.



## NO MORE SEA

Deep sadness comes o'er me  
When stated I see  
Holy words saying plainly  
There shall be no more sea.  
Oh, ocean, I love thee  
Both wildly and well,  
Far dearer than earth  
With mountain and dell.

So grand in thy moods  
They answer to me.  
Each thought, every interest,  
Seems known to thee.  
Thy waves and thy anger  
Now majestically frown,  
Then smoother than crystal  
And thy temper is flown.

Yet listen the murmur  
That soothingly sounds  
And tells of the vigilance  
Of eternal rounds,  
Thy indulgence of motion  
That's never at rest  
But changes with winds  
Whether east or from west.

From north or from south,  
Wheresoever they blow,

They find there their echo,  
If violent or slow.  
Thou wilt lash thee to fury  
Till thy storm it is spent,  
And torn is the rigging,  
And tattered and bent

Are the vessels that floated  
So proud on thy breast.  
The fragments are scattered  
And their crews are at rest,  
And deep in thy depths  
Are millions of bones.  
Oh, hist to the triumph  
That tells in thy tones!

And oft as I linger  
Alone by thy side  
I am told that my grave  
Will be thy waters wide.  
And I ask for no other,  
No winding sheet white,  
But the depths of thy billows,  
Far, far from the light.

No deathbed where gathers  
The damp on my brow,  
No mourners to grieve me  
With words faint and low,  
No shelter where sickness  
Will linger by me  
Until helpless and weary  
I long but to flee.

No racking of pain  
  Until brain reels to sleep,  
And no one, oh, no one  
  To linger and weep.  
Sad ocean, I love thee.  
  Thy moods are my joys,—  
To watch thee despising  
  Vain earth and its toys.

The foam on thy billows  
  With white capping crest,  
As down sinks the sun  
  Far away in the west.  
And some time it shall be,—  
  Of this, I am sure,—  
My rest will be with thee  
  For time evermore.

And my bones shall whiten  
  And glisten some day  
Deep down in thy cavernous  
  Fissures of clay.  
And there shall they linger  
  In thy darkened bed  
Till the Almighty shall render,  
  Sea give up thy dead.

And rolled up as a scroll  
  Shall the firmament be,  
And never again  
  Shall there be any sea.  
And assembled and clothed  
  In their flesh they shall stand,

The drowned who for ages  
Have slept in thy sand.

And there the Great Judge  
Shall they gather before,  
Tho' for centuries dreamed they  
Thy waves beating o'er.  
And among them shall I be,  
Thou dost murmuring say,  
Tho' smiling and calm  
Are thy waters to-day.

## HOMEWARD BOUND

A sea as smooth as placid lake,  
A sky of fairest blue,  
A sun of clearest shining rays,  
And a staunch ship, tried and true.

There is perhaps no better place  
Where one so quickly learns  
To know the other passing well,  
And love from friendship turns.

As there alone upon the deep  
We meet as strangers there,  
And even before the day is done  
We each our joys may share.

With jest and song and laughter  
The days were passing by,  
And now the thought of home at hand  
Came to each brightening eye.

And love called for a last caress,  
And kisses fond were given,  
And vows of troth eternal passed  
To be by distance riven.

And then a passing cloud there came,  
Changed to the tempest's roar;  
And ocean's billows reared aloft,  
Like mountains seemed to soar.

Down in the trough that vessel sank,  
It rose and sank again;  
Captain and sailor at his post  
Did fight that raging main.

Then came the cry, from whence none knew,  
And every face blanched white.  
"The ship's on fire," "The ship's on fire."  
Our doom is sealed this night.

And to the sea whom all had feared,  
Shrunk from in horror fierce,  
Full many a frenzied soul leaped forth,  
With prayers that seemed to pierce

The very vault of heaven's dome  
That hung, a blackening pall,  
O'er all that freight of human life;  
And thus death came for all.

But not one sank beneath the waves  
But prayed the Father's care.  
The arm of flesh had failed them then,  
And life and love are fair.

But He whose ways we may not know,  
Who watches over all,  
Has gathered each unto Himself.  
He heard His children's call.

## A MILLIONAIRE

A very great man has died to-day,  
A mortal worth millions has passed away,  
A personage unique of finance great,  
An important figure, but Death failed to wait.  
Skilful physicians tried all their art  
For weakened arteries of the heart.  
A heart, did you say? Why, had he one?  
There are those to declare that he had none.  
But be that as it may, he has passed away,  
A very great man has died to-day.

Oh, his home was built on a fashionable square,  
Where there was ever the purest of air.  
And his house was the costliest of them all;  
Yet the palsy of death did crawl  
Around the doorway and thru the hall,  
Nor paused he from pity to enter at all.  
Some say that more cruel than death was he,  
The man whom death to-day set free  
From the deed of mercy, the thought of grace,  
Forever from the power of the rich man's place.

A patron of costly art was he,  
Famed pictures worth fortunes you may see  
In golden frames on his walls to-day,  
All subjects and varied, both grave and gay,  
And some of course were imported from France,  
Among them quaint gems of salon and dance,  
And another, an Italian design of the devil,

Was most surely conceived by some son of evil.  
Oh, a lover of artistic sense was he,  
And millions for paintings of merit gave he.

A funeral casket of fabulous worth  
Will consign his mortal remains to earth,  
And columns of newspaper notices say  
That a king of finance has passed away,  
With a lengthy list of his wealth as well,  
And of what he bequeathed to charity tell.  
Charity? What, did he know the word?  
For never before did he give, we have heard.  
The cries of the needy, the orphan's prayers,  
Too intent on his millions to heed their cares.

It has been related by those who know  
That along death's pathway he feared to go.  
He pleadingly offered a wonderful price,  
If the surgeons would save him by some device.  
Oh, yes, he had need of saving, they say,—  
This once powerful rich man who died to-day.  
A cold, hard man with his soul on gain  
And never a thought for poverty's pain.  
A man worth millions has died, they say,  
While millions are starving in the world to-day.



## THE PROMISE

Your hands were dimpled soft and white  
When first I met you, love.  
For labor's task they seemed too slight.  
I begged that I might have the right  
To be for life your guardian knight.

Your faded face deep lines doth wear,  
Your eyes are dim from tears,  
Your form is bent from anxious cares,  
Your hands the marks of toil do bear;  
Yet you to me are now more fair.

I promised you a life of ease  
When first I met you, love.  
You've toiled for me and sought to please,  
And to fresh hope oft gave the lease.  
Not while life lasts will my love cease,  
And I have given you love.

## THE ABSENT ONES

I received a letter from you to-day,  
A girlhood's friend who lives far away,  
One whom I loved long years ago,  
But absence makes memory's heart beat slow.

You tell me your baby boy has died,  
And you write to me, from the distance wide,  
That I should cheer you as best I may,  
Altho' I have lost no child, you say.

Ah, no. Thank God, they are living yet.  
Not for their death are my eyelids wet,  
But distance divides them away from me,  
One out in the west and another at sea.

And my fairest, my darling, is gone from me,  
Across the ocean and far away;  
Yet as none have died I'm not lonely, you say;  
'Tis but as it should be, their being away.

And sometime they'll return for an hour or so.  
Ah, me, is that all the comfort you know?  
Is that all the solace your grief has taught,—  
And that but the depth that death has wrought.

I fear me but shallow is your deepest thought,  
Your friendship not such that I should have sought.  
But believe me, I'll drop many tears for you,—  
For you and the death of your baby, too.

For I know that your heart is sore to-day  
From sorrow that your child is laid away.  
May you think as you close your eyes to sleep  
Of the absent children for whom mothers weep.

After the first depth of your grief has flown,  
When the flowers bloom from the seed you've sown  
On the tiny grave of your baby boy  
Who with witching ways was your constant joy.

When you think of your heaven and him at rest,  
And that soon you may see him among the blest,  
Consider the parents who are praying to-day  
For their wandering children so far away.

And fear they may travel the path of wrong,  
With youth's heedless laugh and careless song,  
And that each hour they are farther away  
From the precepts and guide of their childhood day.

And know, tho' your pillow is wet from tears,  
In the world are mothers who have wept for years.  
As you slumber so sweetly until daylight comes,  
With no anguished dreams of those who roam,

May your life bring no deeper sorrow, I pray,  
Than the death of your child who is safe to-day.  
Then pray as you close your eyes to sleep  
For the many children for whom mothers weep.

## GOOD-BYE

Good-bye, my readers one and all,  
And may you each some time recall  
A sentiment or line or verse,  
Perchance some thought again rehearse.

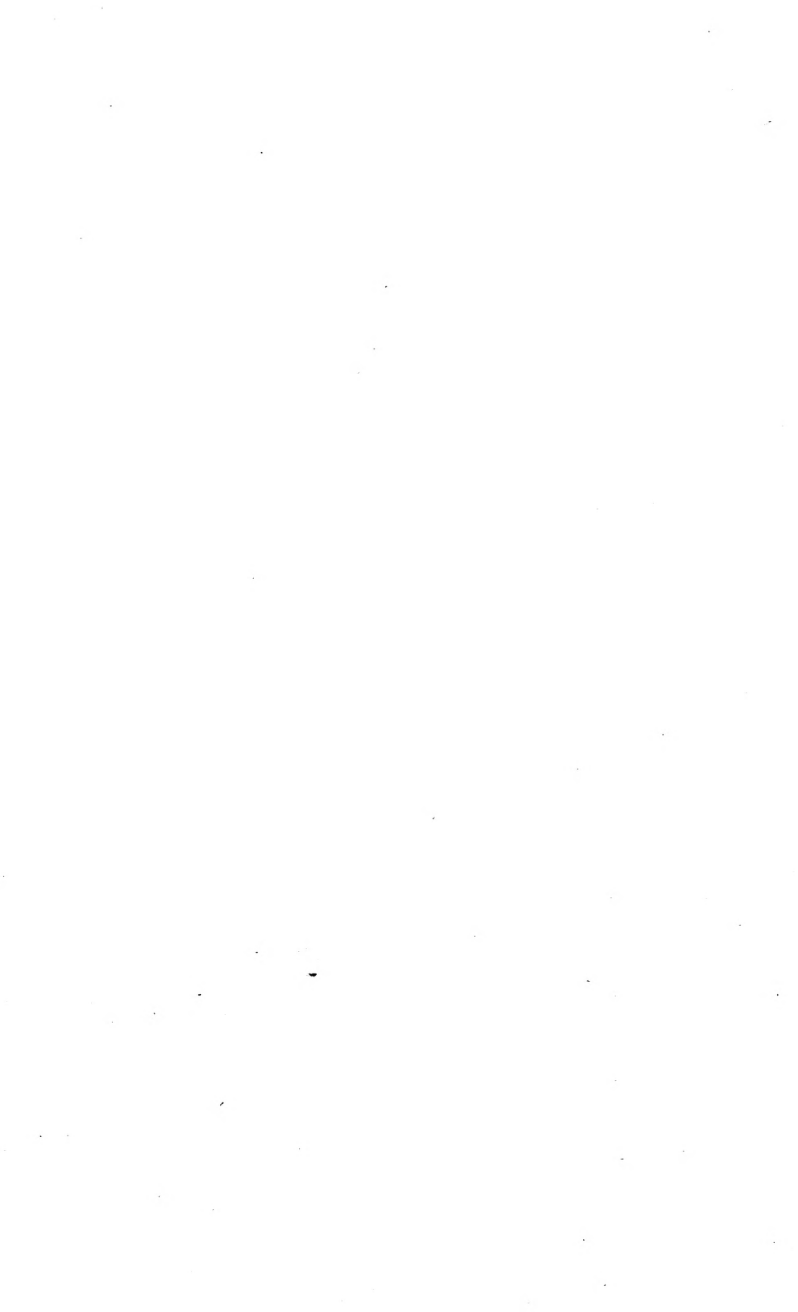
And brighter may life's outlook be  
Because of poem composed by me;  
And if you differ from my view,  
Indulgence then I crave of you.

Remembering that what doth suit one  
Your neighbor's fancy oft-times spurns,  
And that what pleases at one time  
At another proves but spurious rhyme.

These poems were the toil of years,  
And contain perchance some hint of tears.  
May you with interest con each lay,  
And so again I bid—Good Day.







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